

Reporter faces trial in case seen as attack on press rights

By RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) —

An Iowa journalist faces trial Monday on charges stemming from her coverage of a protest against racial injustice, a case that prosecutors have pursued despite international condemnation from free press advocates who say she was just doing her job.

The case of Des Moines Register reporter Andrea Sahouri, who was pepper sprayed and arrested while reporting on a clash between protesters and police, will highlight an aggressive response by Iowa authorities against those who organized and attended protests that erupted last summer and occasionally turned violent.

Sahouri and her former boyfriend are charged with failure to disperse and interference with official acts, misdemeanors that could bring fines and up to 30 days in jail. They face an estimated two-day trial at Drake University in what the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker says could be the first for a working journalist nationwide since 2018.

Sahouri's newspaper, the Iowa Freedom of Information Council and Amnesty International are among press advocates that have demanded Polk County drop the charges, which they call an abuse of power that violate the Constitution's First Amendment.

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Police officers are shown arresting Des Moines Register reporter Andrea Sahouri after a Black Lives Matter protest she was covering on May 31, 2020, in Des Moines, Iowa, was dispersed by tear gas. Sahouri is set to stand trial on Monday, March 8, 2021, on misdemeanor charges, a case that prosecutors have pursued despite international condemnation from advocates for press freedom. (Photo courtesy Katie Akin via AP)

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Continued from Front

"This is outrageous. Reporting at a protest scene as a working member of the media is not a crime. It is a right that must be protected," Amnesty International said. But Des Moines police and County Attorney John Sarcone's office have not backed down. They argue that Sahouri wasn't wearing press credentials and appeared to be a participant in an unlawful assembly, saying journalists do not have a free pass to ignore dispersal orders. The only such order identified in court documents was issued roughly 90 minutes before the arrest. Sahouri, recently honored by the Iowa Newspaper Association as one of the state's best young reporters, has continued to cover public safety while the charges have loomed. While 126 journalists were arrested or detained during 2020's unrest, most either weren't charged or had charges dropped, the Press Freedom Tracker says. Fourteen still face charges. The determination to prosecute Sahouri has baffled observers, who note Iowa's courts have a backlog of felony cases due to the coronavirus pandemic. Critics say authorities seem to be seeking a conviction to justify an officer's decision to unnecessarily use force against a reporter known for building



A press badge for Des Moines Register reporter Andrea Sahouri features her jail booking photo from her May 31, 2020 arrest while covering a Black Lives Matter protest. Sahouri is set to stand trial on Monday, March 8, 2021, on misdemeanor charges, a case that prosecutors have pursued despite international condemnation from advocates for press freedom. (Photo courtesy Andrea Sahouri via AP)

trust with crime victims and underrepresented communities. "It's like somebody with their hand in the cookie jar: They can't admit that they made a mistake," said Des Moines civil rights attorney Glen Downey, who is not involved in Sahouri's case. "The case is important because of the journalism aspect, but it's also emblematic of how they are treating all the protesters." Sahouri, 25, was covering a Black Lives Matter protest at Merle Hay mall when tensions escalated between participants and police. Her then-boyfriend,

Spenser Robnett, accompanied her for safety reasons. Protesters vandalized a Target store, broke windows, blocked an intersection and threw water bottles and rocks at officers in riot gear. Sahouri covered the protest live on Twitter, reporting that officers charged into a shoe store with rifles and shot tear gas to disperse the crowd. Sahouri said she was running from the gas when Robnett was hit with a projectile and she stopped briefly to check on him before continuing around the corner of a Verizon store. That's

when officer Luke Wilson approached, shot pepper spray into her face and restrained her with zip ties, she says. Sahouri repeatedly identified herself as press but was nonetheless taken to jail. She reported her arrest live from the back of a police van. Wilson has claimed he was unaware Sahouri was a reporter until he was detaining her and Robnett intervened, saying she worked for the Register and tried to pull her away. Wilson says he failed to activate his body camera. Des Moines Register executive editor Carol Hunter

said Sahouri's lack of press credentials, which she left in her car, is a "red herring" because police knew immediately she was a journalist and a press badge isn't required to enjoy constitutional protections. Reporters must be free to witness protests and hold participants and police accountable, Hunter said. "Freedom of the press rests on newsgathering," she said. "This really is an attack on a fundamental part of being able to bring people the news." The newspaper is funding Sahouri's defense, which is led by former U.S. Attorney Nick Klinefeldt. Prosecutors obtained and may try to show jurors text messages between Sahouri and protest leader Matè Muhammad from a week after her arrest. Her lawyers say the texts are irrelevant and show a reporter's routine fact-gathering with a source. Muhammad, who has been fighting charges stemming from protests, said he didn't know Sahouri when she was arrested but the two have since developed a professional relationship. He called her "extremely diligent" in vetting information and gathering different perspectives. "We enjoy working with her not because we view her as an activist or on our side," he said, "but because we view her as fair." □

Detroit mayor turned down J&J vaccine in favor of others



In this April 23, 2020, file photo, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan speaks in Detroit. Mayor Duggan this week turned down 6,200 doses of the newly authorized Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine, with favoring shots from Pfizer and Moderna for now. "Johnson & Johnson is a very good vaccine. Moderna and Pfizer are the best," he said Thursday, March 4, 2021. "And I am going to do everything I can to make sure that residents of the city of Detroit get the best." (AP Photo/Carlos Osorio, File)

By DAVID EGGERT Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Detroit this week turned down 6,200 doses of the newly authorized Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine, with Mayor Mike Duggan favoring shots from Pfizer and Moderna for now. "Johnson & Johnson is a very good vaccine. Moderna and Pfizer are the best," he said Thursday. "And I am going to do everything I can to make sure that residents of the city of Detroit get the best." Duggan's comments conflicted with guidance from top state and federal health officials. Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, Michigan's chief medical executive, said earlier in the week that people who are

offered the J&J vaccine should "take it because declining ... could be the difference between life and death." In a statement Friday, she cautioned against comparing the three vaccines — as the mayor did — because of differences in when and where each company conducted its studies, with the Pfizer and Moderna research finished before concerning variants began spreading. In the U.S., the two-dose Pfizer and Moderna shots were 95% protective against symptomatic COVID-19. J&J's one-dose effectiveness of 85% against severe COVID-19 dropped to 66% when moderate cases were rolled in. The Food and Drug Administration

has reported that, just like its predecessors, the J&J shot offers strong protection against the worst outcomes, hospitalization and death. "All of the vaccines are safe and effective and I recommend that all vaccines be offered in all communities," Khaldun said. White House coronavirus special adviser Andy Slavitt said Friday that the White House talked to the Detroit mayor's office, which called the situation a "misunderstanding." "In fact, he is very eager for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine," Slavitt said of Duggan. As of Wednesday, 11% of Detroit residents age 16 and older had gotten at least one dose. The statewide rate was 19%. □

Teacher vaccinations go untracked amid school reopening push

By CASEY SMITH

The national rush to vaccinate teachers in hopes of soon reopening pandemic-shuttered schools is running into one basic problem: Almost no one knows how many are getting the shots, or refusing to get them. States and many districts have not been keeping track of school employee vaccinations, even as the U.S. prioritizes teachers nationwide. Vaccines are not required for educators to return to school buildings, but the absence of data complicates efforts to address parents' concerns about health risk levels and some teachers unions' calls for widespread vaccinations as a condition of reopening schools. The number of school staff members receiving vaccinations — and refusal rates — are unclear in several large districts where teachers were prioritized, including Las Vegas, Chicago and Louisville, Kentucky. Some state agencies and districts have said privacy concerns prevent them from tracking or publishing teacher vaccination data. Others say vaccine administration sites are not tracking recipients' occupations and they are not in position to survey employees themselves. In Oregon, where teachers began receiving vaccines in January, the state Health Authority can't say for sure how many have been vaccinated because the agency does not track the profession of recipients. Portland Public Schools, the state's largest district where learning remains largely remote, is not keeping track either as it works toward launching a hybrid model for elementary schools by April. No states are publicly reporting the percentage of teachers and school staff that have been vaccinated, according to a Johns Hopkins University analysis published Thursday. Education leaders are missing out on an opportunity to address hesitancy about when it's safe to go back, said Megan Collins, co-director of the Johns Hopkins Con-



Granby kindergarten school teacher Christina Kibby receives the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine by pharmacist Madeline Acquilano, left, at Hartford Hospital in Hartford, Conn., Wednesday, March 3, 2021. The first shipments of the vaccine arrived at the hospital this morning. Cities and states are rapidly expanding access to vaccines as the nation races to head off a resurgence in coronavirus infections and reopen schools and businesses battered by the pandemic. (AP Photo/Jessica Hill)

sortium for School-Based Health Solutions. Increased transparency could influence back-to-school decision making, she said, and would likely make teachers and students more willing to return to classrooms. "We're seeing a substantial disconnect. There are states not prioritizing teachers for vaccine that are fully open for in-person instruction, and others that are prioritizing teachers for vaccines, but aren't open at all," Collins said. "If states are going to use teacher vaccinations as a part of the process for safely returning to classrooms, it's very important then to be able to communicate that information so people know that teachers are actually getting vaccines." Over a dozen states had yet to prioritize teachers for vaccines before President Joe Biden directed all state governments this week to administer at least one coronavirus vaccination to every teacher, school employee and child-care worker by the end of March. Biden has promised to have most K-8 schools open for class-

room instruction by the end of his first 100 days in office, or the end of April. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention did not include vaccinating teachers in its guidelines for schools to consider when to bring students back to classrooms. But vaccines have been a sticking point in reopening debates. A push for statewide vaccine data is under way in at least one state, New York, where Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo said he would direct districts to report weekly how many staff members have been vaccinated. The more teachers that have been vaccinated, he said, the better others will feel about returning to classrooms. Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest in the country after New York City, lets teachers register for vaccine appointments offered by the school system through an app designed with Microsoft. But district spokesperson Shannon Huber said the district is not tracking who has gotten vaccinated. A reopening date for Los Angeles

schools is still undetermined and depends in part on all school staff being offered vaccines, a demand of the district's teachers union. At Jefferson County Public Schools, the Kentucky district including Louisville, all staff wanting to receive COVID-19 vaccines got shots in arms by mid-February, and the district is now gearing up to reopen schools. A district spokesperson said vaccination figures were not available. Vaccinations are not mandated in Kentucky, but Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear does require vaccinated teachers who were working remotely to return to their school buildings whenever in-person classes resume. Exceptions can be made with an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, or if the employee qualifies as a high-risk employee. Beshear has called for districts statewide to reopen, saying the state "didn't vaccinate our educators for nothing." Vaccines were a contentious part of the fight to reopen schools in Chicago, which narrowly

avoided a teachers strike last month over COVID-19 safety plans. Vaccinations began in mid-February, but it's unknown how many of the nearly 40,000 Chicago Public Schools employees have been vaccinated. Chicago school system officials say they have some data from appointments that were allocated to school staffers, but medical privacy laws limit their ability to publicize a firm count. A plan that recently cleared the school board will require school employees to disclose their vaccination status and, eventually, require vaccinations. Even after vaccines are widely available to teachers, that may not be enough to leave behind distance learning. In Philadelphia, where schools are preparing to launch hybrid learning for students in PreK-2, a dispute with the teachers union over the state of school infrastructure has remained a stumbling block in returning to in-person instruction. In Detroit, teacher distrust in health care has made the district slow to reopen, Superintendent Nikolai Vitti said. With a community population that is 78% Black, the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 have sowed fear about receiving vaccine, as well as a reluctance from teachers to inform the district that they've been inoculated. Though \$750 in hazard pay is being offered to teachers as an incentive to return to school buildings, Vitti said Detroit will need different outreach from other school districts to encourage vaccinations and in-person returns. "What I'm fearful of is what usually happens in this country," Vitti said. "Based on what the majority is doing — the majority in this case being white suburban rural districts coming back — the understanding is, 'Well, everyone's back, why wouldn't we be back?' There needs to be a differentiated, unique intentionality about the communication and effort to bring back our students and other students like ours throughout the country." □

US adds a strong 379,000 jobs in hopeful sign for economy



In this Sept. 30, 2020, file photo, a passerby walks past a hiring sign while entering a Target store in Westwood, Mass. The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits edged higher last week to 745,000, a sign that many employers continue to cut jobs despite a drop in confirmed viral infections and evidence that the overall economy is improving. (AP Photo/Steven Senne, File)

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S.

employers added a robust 379,000 jobs last month, the most since October and a sign that the economy is strengthening as confirmed viral cases drop, consumers spend more and states and cities ease business restrictions.

The February gain marked a sharp pickup from the 166,000 jobs that were added in January and the loss of 306,000 in December. Yet it represents just a fraction of the roughly 9.6 million jobs that the economy needs to regain to return to pre-pandemic levels. The pickup in hiring lowered the unemployment rate from 6.3% to 6.2%, the Labor Department said Friday in its monthly jobs report. That is down dramatically from the 14.8% jobless rate of April of last year, just after the virus erupted in the United States. But it's well above the pre-pandemic unemployment rate of 3.5%. Stock prices surged on the news of solid job growth, a day after Wall

Street suffered deep losses on fears that inflation and interest rates could soon be headed higher. One year after the pandemic triggered a violent recession, economists are increasingly optimistic that hiring will accelerate in the coming months as Americans seize the opportunity to once again travel, shop, attend sporting events and visit movie theaters and restaurants. Households as a whole have accumulated a huge pile of savings after having slashed spending on those services. Much of that money is expected to be spent once most people feel comfortable about going out. Friday's report showed that the nation's job growth is still being driven by a steady recovery of bars, restaurants and other leisure and hospitality establishments. Bars and restaurants, in particular, snapped back last month, adding 286,000 jobs as business restrictions eased in California and other states. That trend will likely continue as Texas this week

joined some other states in announcing that it would fully reopen its economy with no restrictions. Also hiring last month were retailers, which added 41,000 jobs, health care companies with 46,000 and manufacturers with 21,000. On the other hand, construction companies shed 61,000 jobs, likely in part because of the severe storms and power outages in Texas. Friday's strong jobs report, by suggesting that the economy is on the mend, could complicate President Joe Biden's push for his \$1.9 trillion economic rescue package, which is being considered by the Senate after winning approval in the House. The Biden package would provide, among other things, \$1,400 checks to most adults, an additional \$400 in weekly unemployment aid and another round of aid to small businesses. One discouraging note in the February data is that last month's net job growth came entirely from people who reported that their layoffs had been tem-

porary. By contrast, the number of people who said their jobs were permanently gone was largely unchanged compared with January. People who have permanently lost jobs typically face a tougher time finding new work. In many cases, their former employers have gone out of business. With so much money being pumped into the economy, Oxford Economics forecasts that growth will reach 7% for all of 2021, which would be the fastest calendar-year expansion since 1984. The Congressional Budget Office projects that the nation will add a substantial 6.2 million jobs this year, though that wouldn't be nearly enough to restore employment to pre-pandemic levels. Still, the size of the Biden relief package, coming as the economy is already showing improvement, has stoked fears that growth could overheat and accelerate inflation, sending borrowing costs up and possibly leading the Federal Reserve to jack

up interest rates. Those fears have roiled financial markets for the past two weeks. Fed Chair Jerome Powell sought to assuage those concerns on Thursday — without success, based on sharp selloffs in the stock and bond markets — when he suggested that any meaningful rise in inflation would likely prove temporary and that the Fed would be in no hurry to raise its benchmark short-term rate. Nor did Powell offer any hint that the Fed would act to push back against a surge in the yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which has jumped from about 0.9% last year to 1.5% late Thursday. Still, Powell sounded some optimistic notes. Citing in part the increasing distribution and administering of coronavirus vaccines, he said, "There's good reason to expect job creation to pick up in the coming months." Other recent economic reports have also suggested better times ahead. Americans sharply increased their spending at retail stores and restaurants in January, when the \$600 relief checks were mostly distributed. Retail sales jumped 5.3%, after three months of declines. Factory output also picked up that month, and demand for long-lasting goods, such as autos and aircraft, rose 3.4%, the government said last week. Home sales have been on a tear for most of the past year, driven by low mortgage rates and the desire of many Americans for more space during the pandemic. A huge jump in the proportion of people working from home has also driven up sales, which were nearly 24% higher in January than a year earlier. □



Anger in Lebanon as currency, prices spiral out of control

By **BASSEM MROUE**

Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Protesters in Lebanon burned tires and closed several major roads on Thursday as the severe economic crisis gripping the country continued to spiral out of control with no progress on the formation of a new Cabinet.

The new wave of protests began on Tuesday after the Lebanese pound plunged to record lows on the black market, raising fears that the deterioration will only get worse. Prices have skyrocketed in recent months.

In a new low, a fistfight broke out inside a supermarket in Beirut, apparently over the purchase of subsidized powdered milk. Some supermarkets and groceries have started setting restrictions on how much people can purchase amid limited supplies and as panicked residents stock up on food at home. The Beirut supermarket issued a statement later saying the fistfight broke out when a shopper attacked a branch manager who told him he cannot buy large amounts of subsidized milk and oil without considering the restrictions. "They are humiliating people with a bag of milk,"



Protesters burn tires to block a road, during a protest in Beirut, Lebanon, Thursday, March 4, 2021. Associated Press

shouted one protester at a rally on a main highway north of Beirut. "The ruling class must go."

While officially the U.S. dollar costs only 1,520 Lebanese pounds, the black market price was around 9,950 pounds on Thursday — a day after briefly hitting a record high of 10,000. Just a few months earlier, dollars could be bought at a rate of about 7,000 pounds for \$1.

Lebanon's economic crisis has thrown more peo-

ple into poverty as tens of thousands have lost their jobs since anti-government protests first erupted in late 2019. The country's economy contracted 19% in 2020 and is expected to shrink again this year, according to the World Bank.

Scores of protesters closed the main Martyrs Square in central Beirut while others blocked the main highway linking the capital with the north and south. Sporadic gatherings in other areas also closed roads. Leba-

nese troops moved in and opened them briefly before protesters closed them again.

Lebanon has been hit by one crisis after another, with widespread protests against the country's corrupt political class starting in October 2019. That has been compounded by the coronavirus pandemic and a massive explosion in Beirut's port last August that killed hundreds and injured thousands, decimated the facility and disfigured

much of the city.

Bickering between Lebanon's political rivals has left the country in a stalemate for months, only worsening the economic disaster sparked by a debt crisis and sovereign default last year.

The government resigned days after the Beirut blast and Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri was chosen to form a new Cabinet in October but disagreements between him and President Michel Aoun have delayed the formation of the new Cabinet.

On Thursday, Hariri who is in the United Arab Emirates, blamed his rivals for delays while former Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil, a son-in-law of the president, responded by saying that Hariri "is not ready to form a Cabinet."

The country desperately needs foreign currency, but international donors want major anti-corruption reforms first — lest the funds disappear into a notorious state sector sinkhole that has brought the nation to the brink of bankruptcy.

The crisis has driven nearly half the population of the small country of 6 million into poverty. Over 1 million refugees from Syria live in Lebanon. □

Canada clears Johnson & Johnson vaccine, first to approve 4

By **ROB GILLIES**

TORONTO (AP) — Canada

is getting a fourth vaccine to prevent COVID-19 as the country's health regulator has cleared a Johnson & Johnson shot that works with just one dose instead of two, officials said Friday. Health experts are eager for a one-and-done option to help speed vaccination. Canada has also approved vaccines from Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca and is the first country to approve four different vaccines, said Dr. Supriya Sharma, Health Canada's chief medical adviser. Like many countries, Canada does not have domestic production and has struggled with an immediate shortage of vaccines. The

U.S. so far isn't allowing locally made vaccines to be exported, so Canada — like the other U.S. neighbor, Mexico — has been forced to get vaccines from Europe and Asia. Canada has pre-purchased 10 million Johnson & Johnson doses, with options to buy another 28 million. The U.S. approved Johnson and Johnson last month. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said J&J's vaccine offers strong protection against what matters most: serious illness, hospitalizations and death. One dose was 85% protective against the most severe COVID-19 illness in a massive study that spanned three continents — protection that remained strong even in

countries such as South Africa, where the variants of most concern are spreading. J&J also is seeking authorization for emergency use of its vaccine in Europe and from the World Health Organization. The company aims to produce about 1 billion doses globally by the end of the year. Last month, the island nation of Bahrain became the first to clear its use. The vaccine shortage is so acute in Canada that provincial governments are now saying they will extend the interval between the two doses of Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines to four months rather than three to four weeks so they can quickly inoculate more people. Canadians 80 and above in the gener-



People wait in line at a COVID-19 vaccine at a clinic at Olympic Stadium marking the beginning of mass vaccination in the Province of Quebec based on age in Montreal, on Monday, March 1, 2021. (Paul Chiasson/The Canadian Press via AP)

al public are only starting to get vaccinated this month and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization said this week that extending the dose interval to four months would allow as

many as 80% of Canadians over the age of 16 to receive a single dose by the end of June simply with the expected supply of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines. □

After mixed messages, Europe warns against vaccine shopping

By **ANGELA CHARLTON and DAVE RISING** Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — First, France's president suggested that the AstraZeneca vaccine was "quasi-ineffective" in protecting older people from COVID-19. Now, Emmanuel Macron's government is begging people to take it.

Germany finds itself in a similar situation. Berlin shifted gears on its cautious policy this week after an independent vaccine panel said the AstraZeneca shots should be used in people over 65. Top German officials on Friday argued against "vaccine shopping" and urged people to take whatever potential protection they're offered. Mixed messaging has left many people in both countries confused or distrustful of governmental guidance on the AstraZeneca jab. Meanwhile, Europe's infections are rebounding and other people around the continent and the world are clamoring for access to any COVID-19 vaccine they can get. European governments' initial hesitancy around AstraZeneca's vaccine was based on limited data on whether it works on those over 65. But new data on its effectiveness — and pressure to accelerate the EU's slow vaccine rollout and utilize unused AstraZeneca doses — prompted health authorities in multiple European countries this week to



A nurse receives the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in the state of Brandenburg where the first coronavirus vaccinations are given in doctors' surgeries, in Senftenberg, Germany, Wednesday, March 3, 2021. (Hannibal Hanschke/Pool via AP)

reverse course and allow its use for all ages. In France, all those who work with the sick or elderly have been eligible for weeks to get the AstraZeneca vaccine — but only 30% have taken it so far. Some have argued they want a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine instead, which are currently only available in France to the elderly or those with pre-existing health conditions. So French Health Minister Olivier Veran was sending a letter Friday to all health workers urging them to get vaccinated. And if that doesn't work, he said he could convene a special ethics committee to weigh requiring them to

do so. "Clearly that (30%) is not enough," Veran told a news conference Thursday night.

While paying homage to health workers, he said: "When you are a medical professional, it is your responsibility to protect ... yourself and your patients." At his side, a family doctor echoed the plea. "I appeal to my colleagues: Please come and get vaccinated," said Dr. Marie-Laure Alby, noting that her patients are eager to get any vaccine. The head of Germany's disease control agency on Friday urged people to get vaccinated when given the opportunity. The comments from

Robert Koch Institute President Lothar Wieler came amid reports that many in the country have declined the AstraZeneca shot over concerns it may not work as well as others. "If you are offered a vaccine, please get yourself vaccinated. They are safe and effective," Wieler said, adding that getting large numbers of people inoculated is "the way out of the pandemic." The vaccine made by British-Swedish company AstraZeneca is one of three authorized for use in the 27-nation European Union, though it has not yet received the green light from U.S. regulators. EU countries are also adminis-

tering the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines — and French nurse Michele Freret said she'd prefer one of those. "If they vaccinate us with AstraZeneca and it is not as effective as Pfizer or others, then we will get COVID and there will be no medical staff to care for the people I care for," she told The Associated Press. She's concerned about the virus — "I constantly test myself" — and the doctors and nurses who have lost their lives fighting it. But she said she and some colleagues feel the government is trying to get rid of extra AstraZeneca vaccines by foisting them on medical staff. France, which at more than 87,000 dead has among the highest coronavirus tolls in Europe, had as of Tuesday used only 25% of the 1.6 million AstraZeneca vaccines it has received. Restrictive rules and a rush of deliveries left Germany sitting on a stockpile of more than 2 million AstraZeneca doses this week. France's skeptics often repeat a comment last month by Macron, when he told reporters: "The real problem on AstraZeneca is that it doesn't work the way we were expecting it to ... today everything points to thinking it is quasi-ineffective on people older than 65." Hours after he spoke, the European Medicines Agency approved the vaccine's use for all ages, but the damage to its image had been done. □

YouTube cancels Myanmar military-run channels, pulls videos



Anti-coup protesters take cover behind makeshift shields as armed riot policemen gather in Mandalay, Myanmar, Friday, March 5, 2021. Protests continue in Myanmar against the Feb 1 military coup that ousted the civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Despite daily operations by police to disperse the crowds, defiant protesters continue to return to the streets in parts of the country. (AP Photo)

BANGKOK (AP) — YouTube has removed five channels run by Myanmar's military for violating its community guidelines and terms of service.

The company said Friday that it terminated channels of broadcasters Myawaddy Media, MRTV, WD Online Broadcasting, MWD Variety and MWD Myanmar. The decision follows a Feb. 1 military coup that ousted the country's elected government, provoking massive public protests. "We have terminated a number of channels and

removed several videos from YouTube in accordance with our community guidelines and applicable laws," YouTube said in an emailed statement.

The company said it was monitoring the situation for any content that might violate its rules. YouTube said it had terminated around 20 channels and removed over 160 videos in the past couple months for violating its policies regarding hate speech and harassment, spam and deceptive practices, violent or graphic content policy and viola-

tions of its terms of service. In December, it pulled 34 channels as part of an investigation into content uploaded in a coordinated influence campaign. That campaign uploaded content about elections in Myanmar, regional conflicts and news related to the U.S., China and Malaysia, the company said. The decision by YouTube followed Facebook's earlier announcement that it had removed all Myanmar military-linked pages from its site and from Instagram, which it also owns. □

Madrid hospital staff learn to cope with virus

By BERNAT ARMANGUE Associated Press

LEGANÉS, Spain (AP) — A voice shouts "Red Alert!" from the end of the corridor. An ambulance has just delivered the latest resident of an elderly care home in the Spanish capital. He's in a critical condition and time is of the essence.

A well-practiced choreography immediately goes into motion, sending an adrenaline rush through the emergency ward in this suburban Madrid hospital. One by one, the medical team follows the steps they have revisited ever since the first coronavirus case was admitted to the Severo Ochoa Hospital one year ago. Only when the elderly man is stabilized and transferred to the so-called "red zone," an area reserved for treating COVID-19, does the team slow down and go back to their computers. One year ago, staff had to deal with the exasperation of fighting an unknown enemy, the fear of bringing the virus back home, the scarcity of protective gear and the bodies lined up in the morgue. At the height of contagion, the corridors of this facility of nearly 400 beds were



A COVID-19 patient receives a physiotherapy session in the intensive care unit of the Severo Ochoa Hospital in Leganes, on the outskirts of Madrid, Spain, Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2021. (AP Photo/Bernat Armangue)

crowded with patients on chairs and on stretchers because there were no more beds for the steady flood of new patients. The hospital's 10 beds with intensive care capabilities had to be expanded to 30 with a great deal of creativity and hard work. Iván Andrés, who keeps tabs on the hospital's maintenance needs, says that oxygen tank deliveries, which normally arrive

every three days, went up to twice daily. "There were just not enough cylinders," Andrés recalls. Doctors, nurses, wardens, cleaners and other hospital workers still grapple with the emotional fatigue from those days and the two more surges of the virus since then, both before and after the end of the year. Most acknowledge that the pandemic has been a

life-changing experience. Dr. Manuel Delgado, who heads the hospital's psychiatry services, says consultation from the hospital's own staff has been on the rise and that, at the moment, the delays in vaccination and the uncertainty of not seeing a clear end of the pandemic are the sources of most worry. "It's tiresome to not know when this is going to end," says the doctor

at the gates of his psychiatry ward. "Having the doubt of whether we will finally get rid of it, or whether we have missed on a lot of things that we will never recover." Clad in full protective gear, a medical crew walks under an improvised sign that reads "Together we will pull it off" and into the intensive care ward, where a man in his sixties is crying. The mood is low, but the physiotherapy professionals bring in a moment of relief as they stretch the patient's body. The human touch is much welcomed by COVID-19 patients who spend long periods in isolation. When the team is done and about to leave, a nurse asks: "All good?" The man, mustering all his strength, efforts a thumbs-up in response. Rather than going into lockdown like last year, Spain this time opted for preserving a weak economic recovery and instead imposed night-time curfews, caps on social gatherings and mobility controls across its regions. Schools and most shops remained open, including bars and restaurants in regions like Madrid. This approach appeared to work. □

Pope honors massacre victims at Baghdad church

BAGHDAD (AP) — Pope Francis' historic visit to Iraq to deliver a message of hope to the country's dwindling Christian community following years of unrest and amid a devastating pandemic

Pope Francis is honoring the victims of one of Iraq's most brutal massacres of Christians by Islamic militants by saying their deaths are a reminder that violence is incompatible with authentic religious teaching.

Francis was welcomed joyfully with song and a yellow and white flower necklace as he entered Our Lady of Salvation Cathedral, hours after he arrived in Iraq for the first-ever papal visit. Francis was praying at the church, where on Oct. 31, 2010 extremists gunned

down worshippers in an attack that left 58 people dead. Forty-eight were Catholic, and the Vatican is considering their beatification as "martyrs" in the first step to possible sainthood. Photos of the 48 adorned the altar where Francis spoke.

Meeting with Iraqi priests, seminarians and religious sisters, Francis said: "Their deaths are a powerful reminder that inciting war, hateful attitudes, violence or the shedding of blood are incompatible with authentic religious teaching." Francis noted Iraqi Christians had suffered during years of war, economic hardships and persecution. But he urged them to persevere "in order to ensure that Iraq's Catholic com-

munity, though small like a mustard seed, continues to enrich the life of society as a whole." An aide helped the 84-year-old pope up the steps to the cathedral as it appeared his sciatica nerve pain was making it difficult and painful to walk. Outside, hundreds of Iraqi security personnel wearing black uniforms and carrying light weapons maintained a tight cordon, preventing people from wandering around nearby.

Pope Francis is urging Iraqis to value their religious minorities and consider them a "precious resource" to protect, not an obstacle to eliminate as he opened the first-ever papal visit to Iraq with a plea for tolerance and fraternity. Francis told President Barham Salih



Pope Francis delivers his speech during a meeting with bishops and priests, at the Sayidat al-Nejat (Our Lady of Salvation) Cathedral, in Baghdad, Iraq, Friday, March 5, 2021. Pope Francis has arrived in Iraq to urge the country's dwindling number of Christians to stay put and help rebuild the country after years of war and persecution, brushing aside the coronavirus pandemic and security concerns. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

and other Iraqi authorities gathered at the Baghdad palace inside the heavily fortified Green Zone that no one should be consid-

ered a second-class citizen. He said Iraqis of all faiths deserve to have the same rights and protections as the Shiite Muslim majority. □

LOCAL



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Aruba: the Creative Platform of the Caribbean and a Hub for Creative Talent

ORANJESTAD — Recently, the government announced a legal concept that would make Aruba attractive to international businesses and professionals to either open their business on the island or to relocate. This initiative is based on the Digital Roadmap, a policy document the government made some time ago. The central idea of this plan is to develop a system that would make sure Aruba becomes the Silicon Valley of the Caribbean. This announcement was truly embraced by locals, however it also raised some concerns for others. The Aruban creative industries is yet to be formalized, so it seems as though we are walking ahead of ourselves. On the other hand, it is no secret that legislative advancements take a long time on the island, so it would be beneficial to start changes our laws in order to facilitate economic development and growth in the creative industries.

Aruba is currently in a difficult economic situation and Covid-19 has made it even worse. The need for other income streams besides the tourism industry has now been escalated due to the prevalence of a global pandemic. Aruba, a small island in development by no means would have been able to survive this horror if it was not for the ties to the Netherlands. Now, government officials and policy-makers are thus at a crossroad and the decision has to be made: Aruba has to diversify its economy. The Netherlands has also made this a priority in the content of the "Landspakket" (conditional package in other for Aruba to receive financial assistance) (rijksoverheid, 2020). For years professionals and economist on the island have been signaling and pulling red flags that if Aruba is not going to diversify, as an island we are going to face detrimental events and exactly



this has happened. Diversifying the Aruban economy has proven to be more difficult, or easier said than done. The government has made it clear in 2019 that the focus will be on the following prospective industries: tourism, logistics, agriculture, creative industries, knowledge economy, and circular economy (Economic Policy 2019-2022).

Up until now the Government is exploring the medicinal cannabis industry under the hopes to stimulate the agricultural industry on the island. This comes with its own set of challenges, such as preparing the legal framework to make this even an option, since the cultivation of cannabis is prohibited on the island.

Other initiatives are for example the oil refinery we have in San Nicolas. Since the disappointment and turmoil of CITGO, the government is now considering stimulating the gas industry instead of petrol (oil) in the hopes to create economic development and also to hopeful-

ly reduce the energy costs on the island.

Now, the time has come for us to start pushing for these industries to formalize them. However, the question is how are we going to do this? How can we make sure that we are being effective and that we are not exploiting the already limited resources we have? How is the policy plan going to materialize itself? How can we stimulate with limited funds to invest ourselves? These are all questions that I ask myself daily. Because anyone who knows me, is aware of my deep conviction that Aruba is able to develop a professional and structured creative industries.

We can't turn back in time and now we should take the steps and make use of the best practices of other countries (especially the Netherlands). The Netherlands has a booming creative industries and has developed an innovative economic playing field. The Netherlands has spread their economic market landscape into these 8 economic pillars; Life Science &

Health, Agrifood, IT & Tech, Chemicals, High Tech Systems, Creative, Energy, and Finance. Surprisingly three of these economic markets is related to professions, expertise and jobs in the Creative Industry. According to Invest in Holland (2020) the Dutch creative industries is "built on a rich artistic history including Vermeer, Rembrandt, Mondrian and Escher, the creative industry in the Netherlands is known for its entrepreneurial spirit and out-of-the-box thinking. In fact, the Netherlands generates more creative output than almost any other country in the world. Ranked in the global top 10 for trade, jobs and brands, the Dutch creative industry fuels advertising in the Netherlands. Highly skilled, multilingual workers come from all over the world to find opportunity in the Netherlands' creative agencies. Here, creatives thrive thanks to the Dutch quality of life and top-ranked digital and transport infrastructure".

Continued on Page 9

MONDAY MADNESS AND BINGO ARE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED

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Aruba: the Creative Platform of the Caribbean and a Hub for Creative Talent

Continued from Page 8

Aruban Creative Talent

It amazes me each time I see new initiatives arising and Aruban creative talent getting exposed and receiving the opportunity to thrive. Aruba is a talented country in practically all niche markets in the Creative Industry. Recently Palms Up Records Aruba, founded by Michael Lampe announced that they are signing 5 local talents. This is in cooperation with the very well known Sony/ATV Publishing. With this new venture, 5 local artists will not only be represented locally but can reach the international platform. This is an incredible boost to local artists who want to reach higher levels. This provides the opportunity for Aruba to shift their creative content to a wider audience. The ideal is for these kinds of initiatives continue to happen and not only in the music industry but other in-

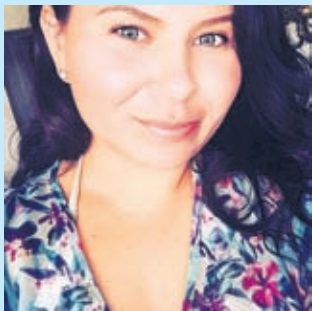
dustries as well. According to UNESCO (2020) "The Netherlands is in fifth place among the most innovative economies in the European Union. Since 2002, the Netherlands has been focusing on reinforcing the social and economic utility of art and design disciplines including architecture, design (including fashion) and new media in the Netherlands and internationally". We should be tapping into these opportunities and it is not only the government's responsibility to develop the CCI. Through collaboration with developed countries, we can benefit from best practices that could also make a difference in our communities.

Moving Forward

Making Aruba the next Silicon Valley is not the complete answer, but it is a step in the right direction. If the government presents a policy plan with a vision and strategy, the private sec-

tor invests, the community participates, NGOs advocate, and academia provides R&D, we could be far more better off. This to illustrate, that it is not a one man show, we all have to carry our part. By making Aruba a creative hub in the Caribbean for many international creative and technology firms, will mean that we should make sure our locals are educated in these fields. If Aruba becomes the Caribbean Silicon Valley, it will provide not only exposure, but economic growth through job provision. But if we do not professionalize our population in this field, it will mean that we lose the opportunity to innovate as a country.

One thing is for sure, we have the talent in house. Now, we have to believe hard enough and work hard enough to realize the Aruban Creative Industries once and for all. Creative is the future! □



Biography Thaïs Franken

Thaïs G. Franken (25) is a local academic researcher and is currently teaching at the University of Aruba in the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS). She is a graduate of the University of Maastricht (UM) and the United Nations University Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT) where she obtained her double Master of Science degree in Public Policy and Human Development with a specialization in Innovation, Institutions and Development. She has been researching the Aruban Creative Industry for quite some time and has collaborated with several local cultural NGOs to bring awareness of the possible impact of the Creative Industry on the island. It was her research on the "Socio-economic and Cultural Impact of the Creative Industry of the Aruban Sustainable Development" that inspired the emergence of the "Creative Islander" column back in 2018. Thaïs is very passionate about topics such as sustainability, innovation, culture, creativity, cultural heritage, education, social entrepreneurship and their role in public management. Next to her academic interests, she enjoys reading, writing, dancing and cooking.

Anniversary of Gold



ORANJESTAD — The friends and family of Ken and Carol Hover happily announce their 50th wedding anniversary.

Ken and Carol were married at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Roanoke, Indiana on March 6, 1971. They have been blessed with 1 daughter and 1 granddaughter, both pretty amazing! They enjoy playing golf and traveling. Ken and Carol have been visiting the island of Aruba since 1978 and have lived on the island part time since 1996. Both are retired and truly living their best life together. They are a wonderful example of friendship, love, loyalty and kindness to everyone that has the pleasure of meeting them. □

*Congratulations*

Do good and have a good time, Volunteering!



PALM BEACH — The people of Aruba have a generous spirit and a strong sense of community. That innate willingness to lend a hand found ample opportunity to shine during the pandemic.

The Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino has been a big supporter of the island's local food bank, Fundacon pa Nos Comunidad. Team Members have been volunteering since March 2020, receiving food items in bulk from generous sponsors, local and international suppliers, and repacking them into smaller boxes design to feed single households. The work is ongoing, 7 days a week, and at the height of the Covid19 lockdown the food bank provided essentials to 4,200 families. It couldn't have met its target without the active participation of the Hilton's Team Members. Norma Lacle, part of the Hilton Team, dedicated every single day since September 2020 to the

food bank and its clients. Norma puts her apron and hair net on in the early morning hours each day, and doesn't stop until the last box is filled and delivered. Both the resort, represented by its Director of Human Resources Glenn Farro, and Norma Lacle, were recognized as VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR, as honors were bestowed at an intimate, yet socially distanced ceremony at the Drive-In Theater.

CEDE ARUBA, a local center for community development supported by funds from the Dutch Kingdom, has helped acknowledge and recognize volunteerism on the island for several years

Each of Aruba's non-profit organization was asked to submit their Volunteer of the Year candidates, and awards were delivered to recipients' cars by director Daniel Tecklenborg, the head of this super-efficient entity working in collaboration with a Dutch Royal Foundation on community projects.

The slogan and the hash tag #HaciBonPasaBon, do good and feel good, is promoted by CEDE Aruba year round. Volunteerism is now more important than ever, say Tecklenborg. The resort and Norma, have been the backbone of our much-needed operation, says Giannaika v/d Biezen, at the head of the Food Bank.,

CEDE ARUBA also organizes Aruba Doet, the largest volunteer event on the island, annually, asking individuals and organization to help social causes, working with friends, colleagues. The Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino, participates each year, and has contributed to many projects. □



AUA Airport: American Airlines Celebrates 50 Years of Service to One Happy Island Aruba



ORANJESTAD – 50 years ago, today on March 3, 1971 American Airlines launched its first ever service to Aruba when it started flights between Miami International Airport (MIA) and Aeropuerto Internacional Reina Beatrix (AUA Airport).

The airline expanded greatly from the 1970s to the '90s, developing from a basically domestic American airline into an international carrier reaching the Caribbean, South America, Europe, and the Pacific, largely by buying routes of other airlines. In 2001 it acquired the American carrier Trans World Airlines, Inc. Throughout 50 proud years of distinguished service to Aruba, American Airlines has been known for its distinctive service which emphasizes timeless values and has maintained a strong foothold in the market, despite intense competition, built solely on the foundations of partnership, dedication, service, and hospitality.

As American resets its international network for future growth, Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) will be the airline's major trans-Pacific hub while MIA will continue to be the preeminent hub for flights to the Caribbean and Latin America. Once government restrictions on trans-Atlantic flying subside, Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) will continue to be American's primary hub for service to Europe.

Today American Airlines is the largest airline to serve Aruba by total number of passengers carried. The airline currently operates to five out of ten hubs, including gateways Miami, Charlotte, Philadelphia, Chicago, Dallas and La Guardia, New York.

"Looking back on our history, we are proud to see how far — both literally and figuratively - we have come. We are celebrating this success with AUA Airport and our devoted staff because they are the ones who make the company what it is today," said Mr. Nelson Cortes, Country Manager for Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao. "American Airlines will continue to focus on exceeding customer satisfaction and will look forward to the future with optimism."

AUA Airport's Air Service Development Manager Mrs. Jo-Anne Meaux-Arends congratulated the Aruba based team and expressed AUA Airport's gratitude to American Airlines as a strategic partner in growing our international network and major asset to the development of the tourism industry. "We are pleased that we've reached this important milestone and we look forward to a very bright future ahead of us." □



China sets growth target 'over 6%,' tightening HK control

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — China's No. 2 leader set a healthy economic growth target Friday and vowed to make the nation self-reliant in technology amid tension with the U.S. and Europe over trade and human rights. Another official announced plans to tighten control over Hong Kong by reducing the public's role in government.

The ruling Communist Party aims for growth of "over 6%" as the world's second-largest economy rebounds from the coronavirus, Premier Li Keqiang said in a speech to the National People's Congress, China's ceremonial legislature. About 3,000 delegates gathered for its annual meeting, the year's highest-profile political event, under intense security and anti-virus controls. It has been shortened from two weeks to one because of the pandemic. The party is shifting back to its longer-term goal of becoming a global competitor in telecoms, electric cars and other profitable technology. That is inflaming trade tension with Washington and Europe, which complain Beijing's tactics violate its market-opening commitments and hurt foreign competitors. Li promised progress in reining in climate-changing carbon emissions, a step toward keeping President Xi Jinping's pledge last year to become carbon-neutral by 2060. But he avoided aggressive targets that might weigh on economic growth.

The NPC meeting focuses on domestic issues but is overshadowed by geopolitics as Xi's government pursues more assertive trade and strategic policies and faces criticism over its treatment of Hong Kong and ethnic minorities. The ruling party has doubled down on crushing dissent as Xi tries to cement his image as a history-making leader reclaiming China's rightful place as a global power. An NPC deputy chairman, Wang Chen, said a Hong Kong Election Committee



Chinese President Xi Jinping, left, and Premier Li Keqiang stand as they arrive for the opening session of China's National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Friday, March 5, 2021. (AP Photo/Andy Wong)

dominated by businesspeople and other pro-Beijing figures will be given a bigger role in choosing the territory's legislature. Wang said the Election Committee would choose a "relatively large" share of the now 70-member Legislative Council. That came after a spokesman for the legislature on Thursday said Beijing wants "patriots ruling Hong Kong," fueling fears opposition voices will be shut out of the political process. Li, the premier, said Beijing wants to "safeguard national security" in Hong Kong. Also Friday, the government announced a 6.8% rise in military spending to 1.4 trillion yuan (\$217 billion) amid territorial disputes with India and other neighbors and ambitions to match the United States and Russia in missile, stealth fighter and other weapons technology. That is less than the double-digit increases of earlier years but a marked rise in real terms when inflation is close to zero. Foreign analysts say total military spending is up to 40% more than the reported figure, the world's second-highest after the United States. China became the only major economy to grow last year, eking out a multi-decade-low 2.3% expansion after shutting down industries to fight

the virus. Growth accelerated to 6.5% over a year earlier in the final quarter of 2020 while the United States, Europe and Japan struggled with renewed virus outbreaks.

The 6% target is higher than expectations for the United States and other major economies but less than the 7%-8% forecasters expected Li to announce. That suggests Beijing is "shifting focus from quantity to quality of economic growth," said Chaoping Zhu of J.P. Morgan Asset Management in a report. Beijing might allocate resources to environmental protection and other initiatives "to boost China's long-term growth potential," Zhu said. Li vowed to "work faster" to develop tech capabilities seen by Communist leaders as a path to prosperity, strategic autonomy and global influence. Those plans are threatened by conflicts with Washington over technology and security that prompted then-U.S. President Donald Trump to slap sanctions on companies including telecom equipment giant Huawei, China's first global tech brand. The ruling party's latest five-year development blueprint says efforts to make China a self-reliant "technology power" are this year's top

economic priority. The party sees "technological self-reliance as a strategic support for national development," Li said. Li promised to pursue "green development" following Xi's pledge last year to ensure China's carbon emissions peak by 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. That will require sharp increases in clean energy in an economy that gets 60% of its power from coal and is the world's biggest source of climate-changing industrial pollution. He promised to reduce carbon emissions per unit of economic output by 18% over the next five years. That is in line with the previous five-year period's goal, but environmentalists say Beijing needs to do more. "It defers some of the most important questions to the future," said Li Shuo of Greenpeace.

Li repeated official promises to promote "peaceful growth of relations" with Taiwan but announced no initiatives toward the self-ruled island that split with the mainland in 1949 after a civil war. Beijing claims Taiwan as its territory and has threatened to invade if it tries to make its de facto independence official. Li said the mainland will "resolutely deter" any activity "seeking Taiwan independence." This year's legisla-

tive meeting is being held mostly by video links to keep Chinese leaders, delegates and reporters separate as an anti-virus measure. The ruling party earlier announced it achieved its goal of doubling economic output from 2010 levels by last year, which required annual growth of 7%. Xi has talked about doubling output again by 2035, which would imply annual growth of about 5%, still among the highest for any major economy. As Xi has sought to cement his image, China has doubled down on repression of dissent in ways that could stifle innovation. The ruling party's desire for the prosperity produced by free-market competition also clashes with its insistence on playing a dominant role in the economy and strategic goals of reducing dependence on other countries. Beijing will promote "domestic circulation," Li said, a reference to official pressure on industries to use more Chinese-supplied components and technology and rely less on foreign inputs, even if that increases costs. That emphasis on self-reliance and the conflict with Washington has fueled fears the world might split into separate U.S., Chinese and other industrial spheres with incompatible technologies, less competition and higher costs. The goal of "decoupling them from foreign technology" is "more likely to harm productivity than help it," Mark Williams of Capital Economics said in a report this week. □

ARUBA CLEAN

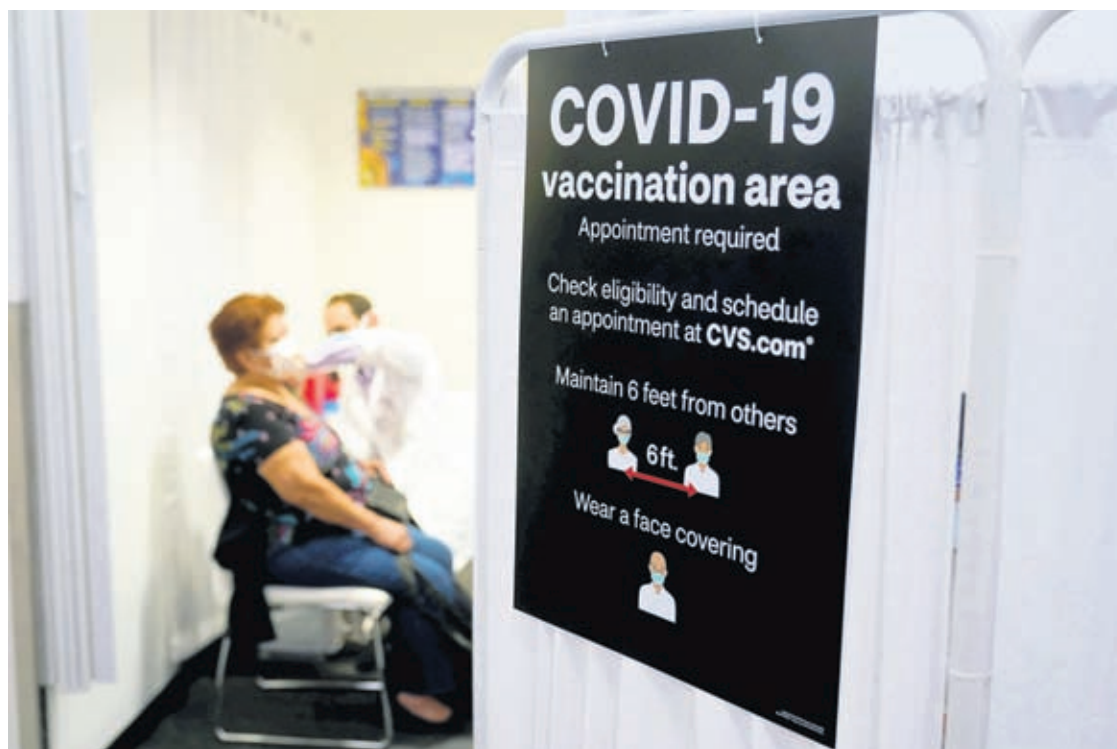


IS MORE DUSHI

Americans vaccinated against COVID-19 still wait for advice

By CARLA K. JOHNSON, MIKE STOBBE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

AP — More than 27 million Americans fully vaccinated against the coronavirus will have to keep waiting for guidance from federal health officials for what they should and shouldn't do. The Biden administration said Friday it's focused on getting the guidance right and accommodating emerging science, but the delays add to the uncertainty around bringing about an end to the pandemic as the nation's virus fatigue grows. "These are complex issues and the science is rapidly evolving," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said Friday. "We are making sure and taking time to get this right and we will be releasing this guidance soon." Such guidance would address a flood of questions coming in from people who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19: Do I still have to wear a mask? Can I go to a bar now? Can I finally see my grandchildren? The need has slowly grown since January, when the first Americans began to complete the two-dose series of COVID-19 vaccines then available. In Washington state, Raul Espinoza Gomez has 22 grandchildren and great-grandchildren and an appointment Saturday for his second dose of coronavirus vaccine. By Easter, the 77-year-old's immune system will be ready to protect him from the virus. But how the family celebrates will depend on government advice, said Melissa Espinoza, 47, of Carnation, Washington, who plans to drive Gomez, her father-in-law, to get his second shot. "We didn't gather together as a big family at Christmas," she said. "We go by what the state and federal guidelines recommend. We've had family members adversely affected by COVID. We know the risks are severe." Worried about persistently high case loads and deaths, the Biden administration



In this March 1, 2021, file photo, a patient receives a shot of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine next to a guidelines sign at a CVS Pharmacy branch in Los Angeles. More than 27 million Americans fully vaccinated against the coronavirus will have to keep waiting for guidance from U.S. health officials for what they should and shouldn't do. The Biden administration said Friday, March 5, it's focused on getting the guidance right and accommodating emerging science. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File)

has condemned efforts to relax states' virus restrictions and pleaded with the public for several months more patience. The caution has drawn critics, who point to the administration's own warnings that "fatigue is winning" as evidence that they need to be more optimistic about the path ahead to secure the cooperation of those who are yet to be vaccinated. "I think it's going to be overly proscriptive and conservative and that's the wrong message," former FDA Commissioner Stuart Gottlieb told CNBC Wednesday of the forthcoming CDC guidance. "If we continue to be very proscriptive and not give people a realistic vision for what a better future is going to look like, they're going to start to ignore the public health guidance." Dr. Jeremy Faust, an emergency physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital in the Division of Health Policy and Public Health, encouraged the CDC to be clearer about when and how it plans to produce guidelines for the vaccinated. "Making the decision to go by the science is also making the decision that you're going to have to make a decision, which is really difficult when

the science isn't settled," he told the AP. "They're drinking from a firehose of science, and sometimes, it gets messy." More than 54 million Americans have received at least one dose of vaccine, and slightly more than half — nearly 28 million — have gotten the recommended two doses. The single-dose Johnson & Johnson shot soon will add a couple million more Americans with questions about what new freedoms they can safely enjoy. "I do hope I get to see my great-grandchildren more," said Rolando Solar, 92, who received his second dose in Miami Wednesday. "But I know things will not go back to normal and, for an old man like me, this is as good as it will be." Tami Katz-Freiman, 65, of Miami, got her second dose three weeks ago, and plans to watch the Miami Film Festival virtually Sunday at the home of unvaccinated friends. All will wear masks. "We didn't have to discuss it with each other, because it's very clear to me that when there is a doubt and you don't have a CDC straightforward rule you better be on the safe side and take care for yourself," Katz-Freiman said. Three weeks ago, the CDC

announced that fully vaccinated people do not have to go into quarantine if they have contact with someone with a confirmed infection (for 90 days after the final shot). But the agency said nothing beyond that, noted Dr. Leana Wen, an emergency physician and public health professor at George Washington University. "That (quarantine guidance) seems to imply to me that your chance of contracting COVID-19 and being a carrier to others is pretty low," said Wen, who previously ran Baltimore's health department. "(But) we need to focus on what is most relevant to people's lives, and my patients are not coming in and asking me: 'If I'm vaccinated, do I still need to quarantine if I'm exposed?'" she continued. "I'd say the most common question I get is 'Can I visit my grandchildren?'" Wen said. Experts say it's understandable that the CDC has been cautious when many scientific questions remain, including how long vaccine-induced immunity lasts, and whether vaccinated people are still able to transmit the virus to others. The answers are important when advising someone what kind of risk they face in different set-

tings, and how much of a risk they are to others. "The vaccines at their best, in the clinical trials, were 95% effective, I didn't say 100%. And that's why we have to keep wearing masks most of the time," said Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious-diseases expert at Vanderbilt University. But CDC has needed to come out with something more for vaccinated people than sticking with the same old mask wearing, social distancing guidance, he added. "People are so eager to do something and they want to see some tangible benefit from the vaccines. Americans are impatient. They want to get on with it," Schaffner said. Indeed, "there is a real cost to putting off this guidance," as people turn to their own doctors for advice, or just make their own assumptions and decisions, Wen said. Waiting too long can diminish the agency's relevance on this kind of matter, said Wen, who believes CDC should have had some kind of guidance in place for vaccinated people back in January. Clearly, vaccinated people should have been encouraged to go get cancer screenings, dental care, or other needed medical appointments. CDC officials also could have said that it's OK for small groups of fully vaccinated people — maybe two or three couples, for example — to gather together for a dinner or other small gathering, she said. Regarding small gatherings among people who have been fully vaccinated, "the relative risk is so low that you would not have to wear a mask, that you could have a good social gathering within the home," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's leading infectious diseases doctor, during a recent White House briefing. Some experts discussed the possibility that movie theaters or cruise ships or certain other businesses might open up to vaccinated people, and ask for proof of vaccination status. □

Greenpeace paints Air France jet green in daring eco-stunt

PARIS (AP) — Nine Greenpeace activists were arrested Friday for vandalizing an Air France jet with green paint in an airport eco-protest that raised concerns about security.

Aéroports de Paris (ADP), the body that runs Paris' airports, said the activists got inside Charles de Gaulle airport by scaling a fence at the edge of the tarmac. With an extendable paint roller, they painted on one side of an Air France Boeing 777, which was parked without passengers, before climbing on the jet. Several of the activists refused to climb down off the plane despite orders from security personnel.

ADP said the demonstrators "were immediately intercepted and contained by the police. They were therefore unable to access the runways. Aviation safety has not been compromised and air traffic continues normally."

Greenpeace said that the stunt was carried out to raise awareness on "gre-

enwashing" of climate change and environmental regulation. It also said it was organized ahead of a climate bill debate in the French Parliament.

"We would like to firmly remind you that the technological innovations so much praised by the Minister for Transport, Jean-Baptiste Djebbari, will not be enough to stem the climate crisis," the group said in a tweet.

The National Airline Pilots Union (SNPL) was quick to denounce the stunt, saying that the "intrusion into the airport's secure area" and "deliberate vandaliz-



In this photo provided by Greenpeace, Greenpeace activists paint a side of an Air France Boeing 777, which was parked without passengers, Friday March 5, 2021 at Roissy airport, north of Paris. Nine Greenpeace activists were arrested after vandalizing an Air France jet with green paint Friday as part of an eco-protest that raised serious concerns about airport security.

(Denis Meyer/Greenpeace via AP)

ing" of an aircraft will result in heavy costs to get the plane cleaned.

The SNPL also defended the aviation industry against the activists' claims. □

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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Difficulty Level ★★★★★

3/06

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Week 5&6/1521 (20k/Wk.);
Week 7&8/1408 (18k/Wk.);
Week 8/1113; 8/1409 (17k/Wk.);
Week 9/1218 (15k);
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Judge: Paper must run Page 1 statement on Meghan's legal win

LONDON (AP) — A British judge has ordered the Mail on Sunday to publish a front-page statement highlighting the Duchess of Sussex's legal victory over the newspaper for breaching her copyright by publishing parts of a letter she wrote to her estranged father. High Court justice Mark Warby said Friday that publisher Associated Newspapers must also run the statement on the MailOnline website for a week, with a link to his earlier judgment in the case. The former Meghan Markle, 39, sued the publisher for invasion of privacy and copyright infringement over five February 2019 articles that reproduced large portions of a letter she wrote to her father, Thomas Markle, after her marriage to Prince Harry in 2018. The judge ruled last month that the publisher had misused the duchess's private information and infringed



In this Monday, March 9, 2020 file photo, Britain's Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex leaves after attending the annual Commonwealth Day service at Westminster Abbey in London. A British judge on Friday March 5, 2021, ordered the Mail on Sunday to publish a front-page statement highlighting the Duchess of Sussex's legal victory over the newspaper for breaching her copyright by publishing parts of a letter she wrote to her estranged father. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth, File)

her copyright. He said the duchess "had a reasonable expectation that the contents of the letter would remain private," and concluded the paper's publication of large chunks of it was "manifestly excessive and hence unlawful." Associated Newspapers says it plans to appeal. The judge did not order the

publisher to mention the privacy ruling in its statement, saying media coverage of the case had already "given wide publicity to the claimant's unequivocal success on the privacy claim." Meghan, a former star of the American TV legal drama "Suits," married Harry, a grandson of Queen Elizabeth II, at Windsor Castle in May 2018. Their son Archie was born the following year. In early 2020, Meghan and Harry announced they were quitting royal duties and moving to North America, citing what they said were the unbearable intrusions and racist attitudes of the British media. They recently bought a house in Santa Barbara, California, and are expecting a second child. They have recorded an interview with Oprah Winfrey that is due to be broadcast on Sunday.

Agreement could free Robert Indiana's estate from lawsuit

ROCKLAND, Maine (AP) — A New York-based copyright holder that sued the late artist Robert Indiana a day before his death has reached a settlement with his estate and the foundation set up to transform the artist's home into museum. The settlement agreement brings the legal wrangling over the estate of the artist known for his iconic "LOVE" series closer to an end. Details were not released, but the agreement "should fully resolve all claims" stemming from Morgan Art Foundation's lawsuit that accused Indiana and his caretaker of violating a licensing agreement, according to a letter that was filed Wednesday in federal court in New York City. The agreement would become effective in May upon settling of "one condition" that must be completed, wrote Luke Nikas, Morgan's attorney. The lawsuit by the Morgan Art Foundation was filed in New York the day before Indiana's death on May 19, 2018, at age 89 on Vinal-



In this Aug. 29, 2009 file photo, artist Robert Indiana poses at his studio in Vinalhaven, Maine. A New York-based copyright holder that sued the late artist the day before his death on May 19, 2018, has reached a settlement, disclosed in March 2021, with his estate and the foundation set up to transform the artist's home into museum. (AP Photo/Joel Page, File)

haven Island, 15 miles (25 kilometers) off Rockland, Maine. It accused Indiana's caretaker and a New York-based art publisher of taking advantage of Indiana. The lawsuit contends they violated its agreement with Indiana by illegally producing other art. The art publisher, Michael McKenzie, is not included in the proposed settlement and is in arbitration. A foundation intends to turn his island home into a museum to display his art once the litigation is resolved. Millions of dollars have been spent on legal fees since Indiana's death, and the state attorney general's office is demanding an accounting of the estate's spending. □

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Blackhawks' Seabrook calls it a career because of injury

By JAY COHEN and STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writers

Longtime Chicago Blackhawks defenseman and three-time Stanley Cup winner Brent Seabrook announced Friday he is unable to continue playing hockey because of injury.

After surgeries on his right shoulder and both hips, it's a lingering right hip issue that's keeping the 35-year-old Canadian from getting back on the ice. Seabrook could remain on long-term injured reserve and not technically retire because he has three years remaining on his contract.

"Not sure it was a decision I made or my body made for me," Seabrook said in a video news conference. "I told my body to screw off for 15 years and it finally turned around and said, 'I'm not going to do it anymore.'"

The 6-foot-3 Seabrook was a key player and leader for

Chicago for more than a decade. He had 103 goals and 361 assists in 1,114 games, plus 20 goals and 39 assists in 123 playoff appearances — all with the Blackhawks after they selected him 14th overall in the 2003 draft.

He helped the Blackhawks win the Stanley Cup in 2010, 2013 and 2015. He also won a gold medal playing for Team Canada in the 2010 Winter Olympics.

"Over his entire 15-year career with the Blackhawks, Brent Seabrook gave everything he had to his teammates and the city of Chicago," president of hockey operations and general manager Stan Bowman said. "His determination to win, passion for the game and innate ability to lead culminated in bringing three Stanley Cups to Chicago."

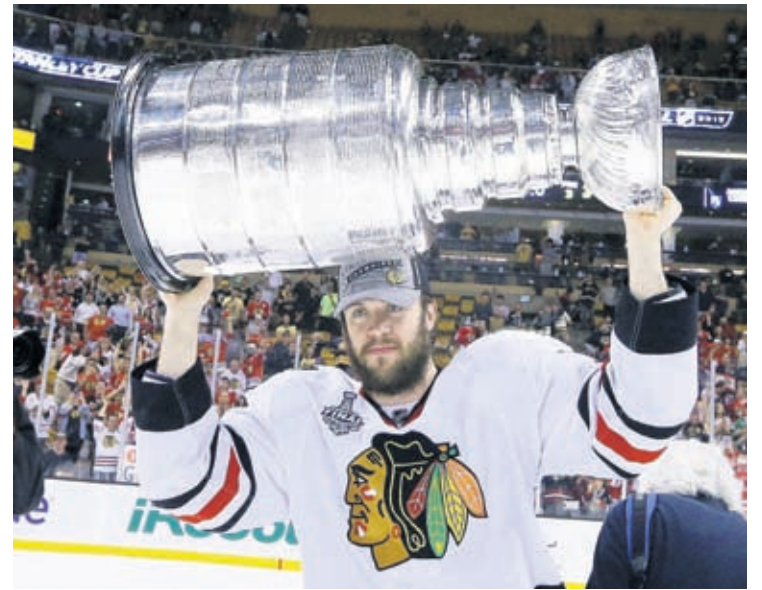
Seabrook's physical style slowly took a toll and his last

NHL game was on Dec. 15, 2019. He had right shoulder surgery later that month, left hip surgery in January 2020 and right hip surgery last February.

"We have tried all available conservative treatments, and nothing has worked well enough for him to live life as an athlete," team physician Dr. Michael Terry said. "We support his decision to prioritize his long-term physical health."

Seabrook, who turns 36 next month, tried to return last summer when the season resumed amid the pandemic. But he decided he didn't have enough time to reach a level where he would be comfortable playing again and he hurt his lower back while preparing for this season. He missed all of training camp and was placed on injured reserve.

Seabrook is owed \$15.5 million over the next three



In this Monday, June 24, 2013, file photo, Chicago Blackhawks defenseman Brent Seabrook hoists the Stanley Cup after the Blackhawks beat the Boston Bruins 3-2 in Game 6 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Finals in Boston. Longtime Chicago Blackhawks defenseman and three-time Stanley Cup winner Brent Seabrook announced Friday, March 5, 2021, he's unable to continue playing hockey because of injury. (AP Photo/Elise Amendola, File)

seasons before his contract expires. NHL rules allow Chicago to keep him and pay him without his \$6.875 million salary-cap hit counting

against the team's spending up to the \$81.5 million limit. Bowman said Seabrook is on longterm injured reserve for now. □

Men's World Cup downhill race stopped because of fog



The course of an alpine ski, men's World Cup downhill, disappears in the fog as race is interrupted in Saalbach-Hinterglemm, Austria, Friday, March 5, 2021. (AP Photo/Giovanni Auletta)

SAALBACH-HINTERGLEMM, Austria (AP) —

The first men's World Cup downhill following the world championships was stopped Friday because of fog after nine racers had completed their runs.

Low clouds in the upper part of the Schneesristal course initially forced organizers to use a reserve start lower down the hill. They interrupted the race when the fog bank moved down the mountain and affected visibility for the racers.

Snowfall in the middle section was also getting denser.

The race was called off 1½ hours after its start as conditions failed to improve.

Italian skier Dominik Paris was leading Vincent Kriechmayr by seven-hundredths of a second when it was stopped. The Austrian won the downhill and super-G world titles last month.

Matthias Mayer, Kriechmayr's teammate, was 0.65 seconds off the lead in third, while Beat Feuz

was more than a second behind in fourth. The Swiss skier leads Mayer and Paris in the discipline standings with two events remaining. The race was a replacement for the classic downhill in Wengen, Switzerland, which was canceled in January amid the coronavirus pandemic. Another downhill at the Austrian venue, which will host the 2025 world championships, is scheduled for Saturday. The weather was expected to improve overnight. □

Midfielder Jamal Musiala signs with Bayern Munich to 2026

MUNICH (AP) — Attacking midfielder Jamal Musiala signed his first professional contract with Bayern Munich on Friday.

The Bavarian club said in a statement that the 18-year-old Musiala, who recently chose to play internationally for Germany over England, had signed a deal to 2026.

Musiala has been making steady progress since he joined Bayern's under-17 team from Chelsea in 2019.

He has made 27 appearances for the first team, scoring four goals. He became its youngest goal-scorer in the Champions League last week when he netted in a win at Lazio, and was already the club's youngest player in the Bundesliga. "I am very pleased that our system of finding talented players, developing them and then integrating them into the first team is bearing fruit," Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidžić said.

Musiala said: "I just feel very good at the club and in the team. I'm playing with the best players in the world and I can learn from them every day in training."

Musiala, who was born in Germany, moved to England as a 7-year-old and came through Chelsea's academy. He played for both Germany and England at under-16 level and most recently played two under-21 games for England in November. □



In this Monday, Feb. 8, 2021 file photo Bayern's Jamal Musiala runs with the ball during the Club World Cup semifinal soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and Al Ahly at Al Rayyan stadium in Al Rayyan, Qatar. Attacking midfielder Jamal Musiala has signed his first professional contract with Bayern Munich. The Bavarian club says in a statement that the 18-year-old Musiala has signed a deal to 2026. (AP Photo/Hussein Sayed)

New Tokyo Olympic president tries to assure Japan on safety

TOKYO (AP) — The new president of the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee has begun holding weekly news conferences hoping to win over a doubting Japanese public with the postponed games opening in just under five months.

Seiko Hashimoto is trying to assure everyone that the Olympics will be safe and secure, a phrase she repeated a dozen times Friday in her inaugural news conference. Polls show about 80% of Japanese think the games should be postponed again or canceled amid the pandemic. "The situation around coronavirus doesn't go easy on us," Hashimoto said. "I understand there are a lot of people in Tokyo and in Japan who have concerns about the games in Tokyo this summer. I'd like to share my thoughts and alleviate some of those concerns." She also needs to ease fears about the torch relay, which is set to begin on March 25 from the northeastern prefecture of Fukushima. The relay involves 10,000 runners and goes to every corner of Japan. The Olympics open on July 23, followed by the Paralympics on Aug. 24. They will



Seiko Hashimoto, president of the Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (Tokyo 2020), speaks before reporters after a five-party meeting at the Tokyo 2020 headquarters in Tokyo on Wednesday, March 3, 2021. (Du Xiaoyi/Pool Photo via AP)

include 11,000 Olympians, 4,400 Paralympic athletes and tens of thousands of judges, officials, sponsors, volunteers, VIPs, media and broadcasters. "People need to start to build confidence in the safety of the games," Hashimoto said. "It will be very difficult without that." Hashimoto said she has appointed CEO Toshio Muto to head the relay effort. The Olympics were postponed a year

ago just as the torch relay opened. If the relay falters with crowding, cheering spectators and unprepared local authorities, the Olympics could go down with it. Early conjecture hinted at calling off the relay, but it is heavily sponsored by Coca-Cola and Toyota. Sponsors and the sale of broadcast rights account for 91% of the International Olympic Committee's income. Hashimoto

has promised to make a decision on admitting fans from abroad by March 25, or at least by the end of the month. The Mainichi newspaper reported this week, citing an unnamed government source, that foreign fans will not be allowed. IOC President Thomas Bach also hinted at the decision going that way. Hashimoto has not confirmed it. "Welcoming everyone globally and having a full audience

is something we wish we could do," she said. "But health-care conditions in Japan have to be well prepared. Otherwise, some people may come as spectators and cause harm." Hashimoto took over two weeks ago after the former president of the organizing committee, Yoshiro Mori, was forced to resign following derogatory comments about women. Hashimoto almost immediately appointed 12 women to the executive board, bringing the total to 19 out of 45, or 42%. It had been 20%. Tokyo was awarded the Olympics 7 1/2 years ago and had few women in visible positions of authority until Hashimoto shook things up. Hashimoto said she hoped the move put a focus on the issue of gender equality in Japan. The country ranks 121st of 153 on the World Economic Forum's gender-equality ratings. "People in the world are now paying attention to gender issues, diversity issues on the organizing committee," she said. "The quick response is very important. And that was the premise of us taking action. But increased numbers or an increased percentage should not be the main goal." □

Astros minus 8 pitchers because of coronavirus protocols



Houston Astros pitcher Bryan Abreu (66) laughs with other pitchers during spring training baseball in West Palm Beach, Fla., Monday, Feb. 22, 2021. (Karen Warren/Houston Chronicle via AP)

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — The Houston Astros are minus eight pitchers because of COVID-19 protocols, but general manager James Click said there were no plans to pause activity at the team's spring training camp.

Manager Dusty Baker said Friday that pitchers Cristian Javier, Pedro Báez, Francis Martes, Enoli Paredes and Hector Velazquez were out. On Thursday, Baker said pitchers Bryan Abreu, Ronel Blanco and Luis Garcia were sent away from the

complex. It was not known whether the eight pitchers had tested positive for the virus or had come in close contact with someone who had tested positive. There was no exact timetable for their return, but they must quarantine for at least a week under Major League Baseball's health and safety protocols.

Earlier this week, the Astros lost starter Framber Valdez when he suffered a broken left finger while fielding a ball in an exhibition game. The Astros aren't in any danger of running out of pitchers, however. They list 23 pitchers on their 40-man roster, plus 16 more nonroster pitchers in camp. Jose Urquidy started and pitched two innings Friday against Miami.

Click said the team wasn't

worried about a possible camp shutdown.

"No, we are not concerned about that," he told Houston media, adding the protocols are "designed to isolate any potential issues and prevent them from reaching a scale at which point we would have to consider shutting down or pausing."

Click said the team had a plan in place to permit the players to continue their work, albeit away from the club complex.

As for pitching plans in the upcoming week, Baker said it was a matter of "adjust and readjust."

"We've just got to find a way to work around it and find a solution. We're missing quite a few arms now. We're concerned, but fortunately we had more pitchers than we

knew what to do with when we opened camp," he told Houston reporters.

The Astros share their spring training complex and ballpark with the Washington Nationals.

"We heard that they had some things going on over there," Washington manager Dave Martinez said. "Today was our testing day. Before we got tested, we asked guys questions about whether they were with any of the Houston Astros, coaches included. They all said no, so hopefully we can keep our side of the stadium free of COVID." "I want to say, our guys are doing a great job about following protocol. So I hope that everybody's OK over there with Houston and they can nip that in the bud," he said. □